



## **Groningen, Ghent, Uppsala, Turku & Göttingen Annual Legal Research Network Conference 2009**

2009, hosted by Ghent University

### **The European Impact on the Finnish Constitution**

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April, 2009

#### **Abstract**

The new Constitution of Finland entered into force on 1 March 2000. The other European constitutional systems have in many respects served as a model for the Finnish Constitution. One of the basic objects behind the constitutional reform was to develop the distribution of powers between the Finnish state organs so that it would better than before correspond to the standards of Western European parliamentary systems. This has in general required the strengthening of the status of the Prime Minister and the Government (= Cabinet) and restricting the traditionally strong powers of the President of the Republic.

According to Section 93 of the Finnish Constitution, the Government is responsible for the national preparation of the decisions to be made in the European Union, and decides on the concomitant Finnish measures, unless the decision requires the approval of the Parliament. This constitutional solution has been very far-reaching. Because of it, the Prime Minister – not the President of the Republic – has become the leader of Finnish EU policy and at the same time, his position in the field of both domestic policy and foreign policy has been radically strengthened.

Finland's membership in the EU has in many ways changed also the status of the Parliament. Its position has weakened because much of the national legislative power has been transferred to the EU. However, the diminishing of legislative powers has been

compensated by giving the Parliament quite a strong position in the national preparation process for EU matters.

The paper also tries to explain how the role of courts in the Finnish constitutional system has changed during Finnish EU-membership.

Keywords: Constitutional Law, Constitution, European Union